

New Hampshire ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

February 2025

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Remote and Hybrid Work in New Hampshire

Regional and Industry Outlook

Even as prominent companies nationwide instituted return-to-office policies, remote workers remained a notable segment of the overall workforce and a vital component of key industries in 2024. According to the Census Bureau’s 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) one-year estimates, about 16 percent of workers in New Hampshire worked from home, down from 17.3 percent in 2022. In practice, the wording of the ACS question only captures those who are fully remote; the survey design takes respondents working in a hybrid arrangement and groups them by their commuting mode when they do work in the office. While fully remote work may have declined slightly, evidence suggests that a hybrid model may have more staying power.

The Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) can be used to estimate the prevalence of remote work in certain industries by isolating employment and wages categorized under the “995 – Unassigned”

location code. This code indicates that an establishment has no fixed physical location within the state but employs workers living in New Hampshire: in-state hybrid employees are therefore excluded. Fully remote workers employed at an establishment with a fixed physical location in New Hampshire are also excluded, regardless of whether they work in this location. The most recent QCEW data, published in January, covers the second quarter of 2024. Estimates of remote worker percentages based on QCEW data are simply the share of average monthly employment that is not assigned to a primary location. In the second quarter of 2024, unassigned firms accounted for 28.5 percent of all private firms in New Hampshire – an increase of 1.2 percent since the second quarter 2023. Those firms made up 7.8 percent of average monthly private employment – up 0.4 percent year-over-year.

At the industry sector level, approximately 26 percent of professional, scientific, and technical

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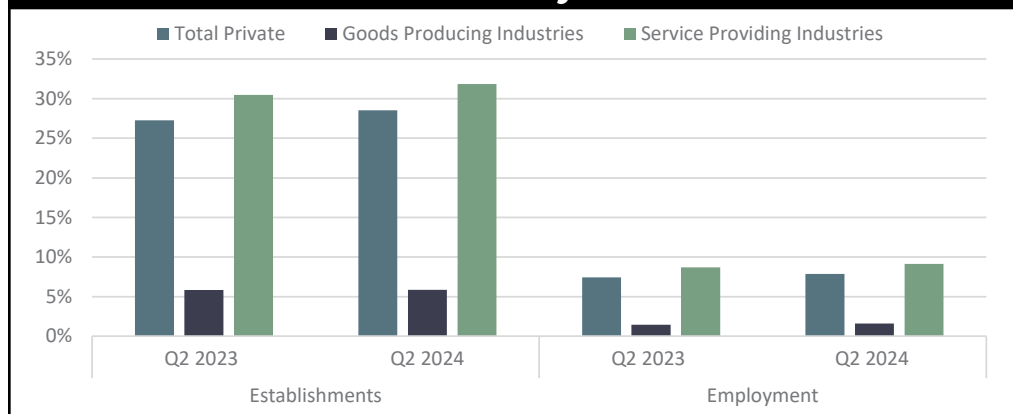
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services employment has no fixed location within New Hampshire. This sector includes software developers, accountants, lawyers, and consultants among others. About 22 percent of administrative and support services employment – covering office administrative services, employment services, and other services that support the operations of other organizations – has no fixed location. On the subsector level, insurance carriers and related activities, as well as various types of wholesaling, also occur remotely at similar rates in the state.

Due to the lag in QCEW data release, it is possible that more employers are operating within the state without a primary location and are yet to be reclassified. Firms above a specified employee count are surveyed on a rotating basis every three years to update administrative details (e.g., location) to ensure data quality.¹ For continuity purposes, exceptionally large firms assigned to the same location for a long time may continue to be tied statistically to that location even if they are known to have gone remote and do not maintain physical worksites. This helps to avoid creating the statistical illusion that a region lost workers

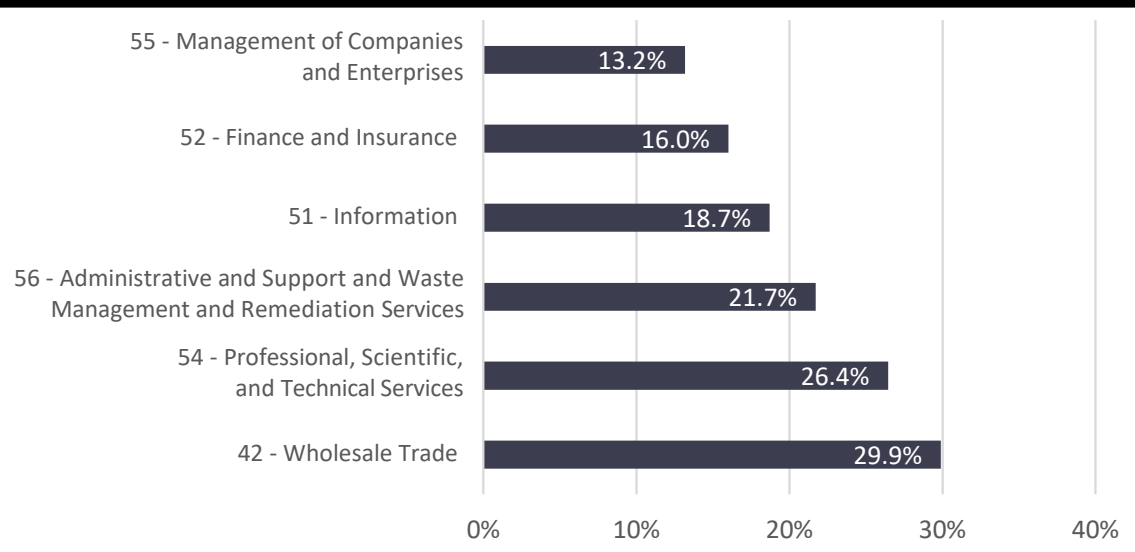
Percentage of Establishments and Employment with No Primary Location



Source: New Hampshire Employment Security, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

1 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2025, February 7). Annual Refiling Survey (ARS) FAQs Page. Retrieved from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: <https://www.bls.gov/respondents/ars/faqs.htm>

Percent of Total QCEW Monthly Employment with No Primary Location - Sector Level 2024 Q2



Source: New Hampshire Employment Security, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

when firms are moved from a location code to a 995 code. Procedural adaptations like these may explain part of the discrepancy between QCEW remote estimates and survey data.

Recent job listings from the fourth quarter of 2024 also shed some light on which industries, companies, and occupations continue to embrace remote or hybrid work beyond pandemic impacts. Among postings for full-time, permanent employment advertised as either remote² or hybrid eligible, the top occupations in New Hampshire by number of unique postings were software developers, project managers, marketing managers, and wholesale representatives. Of the firms hiring for these positions, the top industries were colleges and universities, portfolio management and investment advice, and direct health and medical insurance carriers.³

Commuters

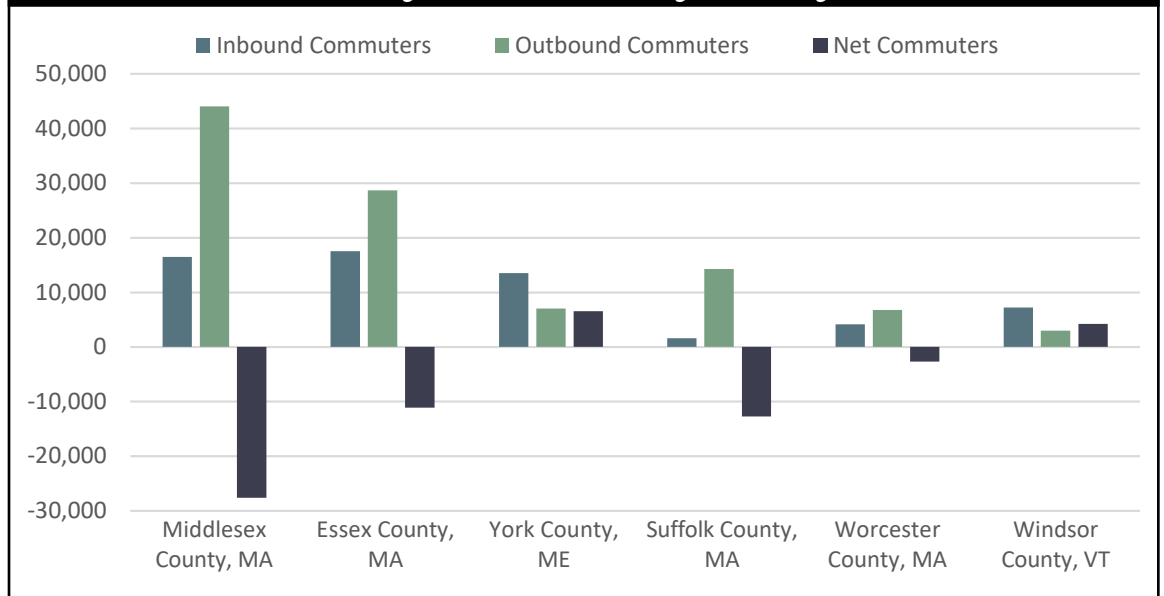
Commuting pattern data shows longer mean commuting times for workers

living in Rockingham and Hillsborough counties – and a high level of commuter interchange between the border counties of New Hampshire and Massachusetts. Middlesex, Essex, and Worcester counties span most of the New Hampshire-Massachusetts border and Boston city proper is located within Suffolk County.

For workers commuting from southern New Hampshire to Massachusetts border counties, hybrid work

policies are more prevalent than in other regions of the state. In 2024, there were 684,354 unique job postings for full-time, permanent positions in the Manchester-Nashua MSA and the Boston-Cambridge-Newton MSA (which includes Rockingham and Strafford counties). Of those postings, 64,303 or about 9.4 percent were advertised as remote or hybrid. Limiting the data universe to just postings in “remote-intensive” industries as defined above, the proportion rises to about 13 percent.⁴

Origin and Destination of New Hampshire Daily Commuters by County

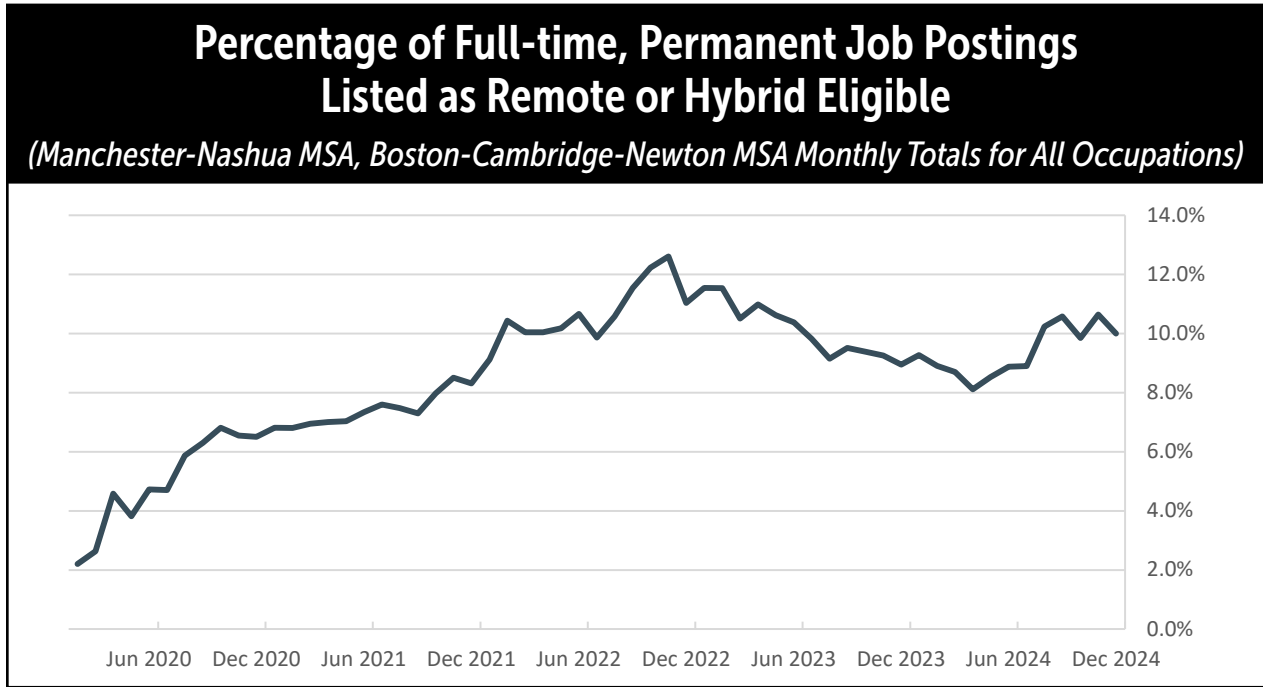


Source: Lightcast Data

² Where the poster is located in-state

³ Lightcast Data

⁴ Ibid.



Source: Lightcast Data

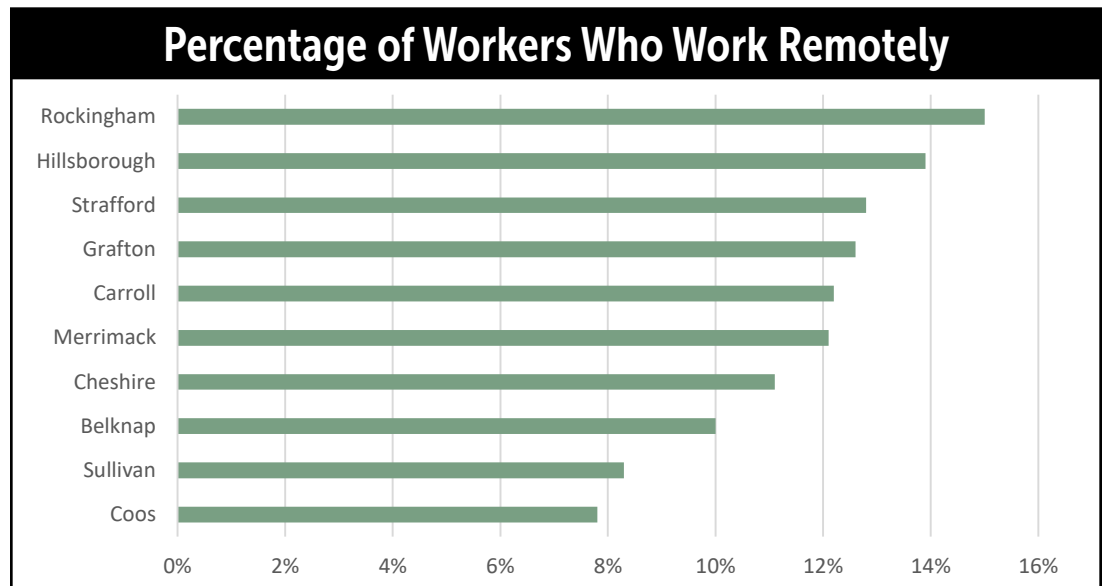
These numbers only cover new hires in the area so the true percentage of border-region hybrid employment in these industries may be higher due to long-term employees retaining hybrid arrangements left over from the pandemic. If hybrid/remote companies begin to reduce headcount through layoffs or by implementing strict return-to-office policies, the “new hire” remote rate will act as a constraint. The overall percentage may naturalize to align with the “new hire” rate as workers seeking new hybrid or remote employment compete for the limited number of vacant hybrid and remote positions.

What Determines the Share of Remote Workers in a County?

New Hampshire’s remote workers are not distributed proportionally across counties. The Census Bureau’s 2019-2023 ACS five-year estimates provide county-level commuting data that show Rockingham and Hillsborough Counties have notably higher rates of remote work, while Coös and Sullivan Counties are considerably lower than the overall statewide percentage.⁵ Higher rates of remote work in a county appears to be positively correlated with total population (as a proxy for urbanization) and educational

attainment as well as median household income – though the directionality of that relationship is unclear.

Industry mix plays a large role in the variance of remote work rates by county as well. Merrimack County, the third most populous and third highest-earning of the ten counties, ranks sixth in percentage of remote workers – possibly due to a generally lower level of remote work penetration in healthcare and government administration, sectors which are highly concentrated in Merrimack County compared to Rockingham and Hillsborough.⁶ Crucially, exceptions to the trend can be the result of definitional industry facts rather than employer policy. As a caveat, healthcare is an illustrative example: a high-earning, education-intensive sector that



Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2019-2023 Five-Year Estimates

⁵ Because of the 2019-2023 ACS Five-Year Estimates’ longer sample period, statewide percentages will not agree with the 2023 ACS One-Year Estimates cited above

⁶ Ibid.

largely requires an in-person presence to render services. While demographic factors like population and educational attainment help predict the percentage of remote workers in an area, the concentration of workers in select industries relative to regional and national averages is also important.

The Future of Work-from-Home

Part of the difficulty in measuring hybrid work stems from definitional challenges. As an example, an employee who has not worked in-person since the pandemic, but their company maintains an office in-state. According to the definition used in QCEW data, they are in-person, though most would disagree. These nuances, along with the geographically diffuse nature of fully remote work, make remote and hybrid work difficult to document with a high degree of precision. Though remote employers tend to be smaller in size, assigning accurate industrial codes to unassigned firms in New Hampshire can be difficult.

Certain industries, however, have demonstrated a clear enthusiasm for the practice that shows no signs of slowing down. Despite inspired debate about the advantages and drawbacks of remote work on worker productivity and company culture, office space renewals declined sharply in New Hampshire throughout 2024. As of January, the Southern New Hampshire commercial real estate market does not have any new office space under construction, and the office vacancy rate across all property classes rose to 10.5% in 2024 – its highest level in five years.⁷ Commercial landlords in Manchester have adjusted to the oversupply by repurposing as much as 7.6 percent of the submarket's office space.⁸ Steps like these demonstrate that other market players have already reckoned with the indelible changes remote and hybrid work models have made to the economic landscape.

– Jack Becker, Economist

⁷ Cushman & Wakefield Research Unit. (2025). Marketbeat - Southern New Hampshire Office Q4 2024. Cushman & Wakefield.

⁸ Rohrer, R. (2024). Navigating Shifts: New Hampshire's Office Market Resilience Amid National Uncertainty. Manchester: Colliers.